



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 745**

*January Session, 2003*

**AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS TO  
INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-112 of the general statutes, as amended by  
2 section 13 of public act 03-2, is repealed and the following is  
3 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

4 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary  
5 family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be  
6 provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary  
7 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the  
8 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of  
9 1996. Under the temporary family assistance program, benefits shall be  
10 provided to a family for not longer than twenty-one months, except as  
11 provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section. For the purpose of  
12 calculating said twenty-one-month time limit, months of assistance  
13 received on and after January 1, 1996, pursuant to time limits under  
14 the aid to families with dependent children program, shall be  
15 included. For purposes of this section, "family" means one or more  
16 individuals who apply for or receive assistance together under the  
17 temporary family assistance program.

18 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall exempt a family from  
19 such time-limited benefits for circumstances including, but not limited

20 to: (1) A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or  
21 of an advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no  
22 other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with  
23 a needy caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the  
24 incapacity of another member of the household, if there is no other  
25 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a  
26 caretaker relative who is not legally responsible for the dependent  
27 children in the household if such relative's needs are not considered in  
28 calculating the amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt  
29 caretaker relative in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker  
30 relative caring for a child who is under one year of age and who was  
31 born not more than ten months after the family's enrollment if there is  
32 no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (5) a family  
33 with a pregnant or postpartum caretaker relative if a physician has  
34 indicated that such relative is unable to work and there is no other  
35 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (6) a family with a  
36 caretaker relative determined by the commissioner to be unemployable  
37 and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household;  
38 and (7) minor parents attending and satisfactorily completing high  
39 school or high school equivalency programs.

40 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the  
41 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such  
42 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than [two] three  
43 extensions to such family who has made a good faith effort to comply  
44 with the requirements of the program and despite such effort has a  
45 total family income at a level below the payment standard, or has  
46 encountered circumstances preventing employment including, but not  
47 limited to: (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's  
48 children; or (2) other circumstances beyond such family's control. The  
49 commissioner shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in  
50 determining applicable family income. The commissioner may grant a  
51 fourth or a subsequent six-month extension if each adult in the family  
52 meets one or more of the following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded  
53 from engaging in employment activities due to domestic violence or

54 another reason beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or  
55 more substantiated barriers to employment including, but not limited  
56 to, the lack of available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe  
57 mental or physical health problems, one or more severe learning  
58 disabilities, domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or  
59 behavioral health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more  
60 hours per week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues  
61 to earn less than the family's temporary family assistance payment  
62 standard; or (D) the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five  
63 hours per week due to (i) a documented medical impairment that  
64 limits the adult's hours of employment, provided the adult works the  
65 maximum number of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii)  
66 the need to care for a disabled member of the adult's household,  
67 provided the adult works the maximum number of hours the adult's  
68 caregiving responsibilities permit. Families receiving temporary family  
69 assistance shall be notified by the department of the right to petition  
70 for such extensions. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the  
71 commissioner shall not provide benefits under the state's temporary  
72 family assistance program to a family that is subject to the twenty-one  
73 month benefit limit and has received benefits beginning on or after  
74 October 1, 1996, if such benefits result in that family's receiving more  
75 than sixty months of time-limited benefits unless that family  
76 experiences domestic violence, as defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B), P.L.  
77 104-193. For the purpose of calculating said sixty-month limit: (I) A  
78 month shall count toward the limit if the family receives assistance for  
79 any day of the month, and (II) a month in which a family receives  
80 temporary family assistance benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction  
81 other than Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

82 (d) Medicaid eligibility shall be extended for two years to a family  
83 who becomes ineligible for cash assistance while employed or a family  
84 with an adult who, within six months of becoming ineligible, becomes  
85 employed.

86 (e) Under said program (1) no family shall be eligible that has total  
87 gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in the

88 calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and previously  
89 eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because of receipt  
90 of workers' compensation benefits by a family member who  
91 subsequently returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of  
92 such benefits, earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal  
93 poverty level; (2) the increase in benefits to a family in which an infant  
94 is born after the initial ten months of participation in the program shall  
95 be limited to an amount equal to fifty per cent of the average  
96 incremental difference between the amounts paid per each family size;  
97 and (3) a disqualification penalty shall be established for failure to  
98 cooperate with the biometric identifier system. Except when  
99 determining eligibility for a six-month extension of benefits pursuant  
100 to subsection (c) of this section, the commissioner shall disregard the  
101 first fifty dollars per month of income attributable to child support that  
102 a family receives in determining eligibility and benefit levels for  
103 temporary family assistance.

104 (f) A family receiving assistance under said program shall cooperate  
105 with child support enforcement, under title IV-D of the Social Security  
106 Act. A family shall be ineligible for benefits for failure to cooperate  
107 with child support enforcement.

108 (g) The Department of Social Services, upon qualifying a family for  
109 assistance under said program, shall provide such family with  
110 informational materials which address the time-limited eligibility  
111 requirements of the program, criteria used to determine whether a  
112 family shall be exempt from time-limited eligibility requirements  
113 under the program, and criteria used to determine whether a family  
114 qualifies for an extension of program benefits. The department shall  
115 also provide notice to families receiving benefits under the program of  
116 changes to federal law which affect eligibility requirements. The  
117 department shall distribute informational materials produced in  
118 accordance with this subsection to community-based organizations  
119 providing services to families receiving assistance under the  
120 temporary family assistance program and to the Infoline of  
121 Connecticut. Not later than January 1, 2004, and annually thereafter,

122 the commissioner shall file a report with the council to monitor the  
123 implementation of the temporary family assistance program and  
124 employment services program established pursuant to section 17b-29,  
125 on the efforts of the department to provide the informational materials  
126 required under this subsection.

127     ~~[(g)]~~ (h) A family leaving assistance at the end of (1) said twenty-  
128 one-month time limit, including a family with income above the  
129 payment standard, or (2) the sixty-month limit shall have an interview  
130 for the purpose of being informed of services that may continue to be  
131 available to such family, including employment services available  
132 through the Labor Department. Said interview shall contain a  
133 determination of benefits available to said family provided by the  
134 Department of Social Services. Said interview shall also include a  
135 determination of whether such family is eligible for food stamps or  
136 Medicaid. Information and referrals shall be made to such a family for  
137 services and benefits including, but not limited to, the earned income  
138 tax credit, rental subsidies emergency housing, employment services  
139 and energy assistance.

140     ~~[(h)]~~ (i) An applicant or recipient of temporary family assistance  
141 who is adversely affected by a decision of the Commissioner of Social  
142 Services may request and shall be provided a hearing in accordance  
143 with section 17b-60.

144     ~~[(i)]~~ (j) The commissioner may continue to operate under all or  
145 portions of the federal waivers granted under Section 1115 of the Social  
146 Security Act for the demonstration entitled "Reach For Jobs First".  
147 Notwithstanding continuation of the provisions of said federal  
148 waivers, the commissioner shall continue the evaluation of the  
149 effectiveness of the temporary family assistance program and may  
150 continue to utilize a control group using different program  
151 requirements.

152     ~~[(j)]~~ (k) The commissioner shall report, annually on or before  
153 November fifteenth, to the joint standing committees of the General

154 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services and  
155 appropriations and the budgets of state agencies on the funding  
156 requirements necessary to support the programs funded by the  
157 temporary assistance for needy families block grant.

158 [(k)] (l) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement  
159 policies and procedures necessary for the purposes of this section  
160 while in the process of adopting such policies and procedures in  
161 regulation form, provided the commissioner prints notice of intention  
162 to adopt the regulations in the Connecticut Law Journal within twenty  
163 days of implementing such policies and procedures. Final regulations  
164 shall be submitted to the legislative regulation review committee no  
165 later than November 15, 1997. Policies and procedures implemented  
166 pursuant to this subsection shall be valid until the time final  
167 regulations are effective.

168 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 17b-749 of the general statutes, as  
169 amended by section 16 of public act 03-2, is repealed and the following  
170 is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

171 (b) The commissioner shall establish income standards for  
172 applicants and recipients at a level to include a family with gross  
173 income up to fifty per cent of the state-wide median income, except the  
174 commissioner (1) may increase the income level to up to seventy-five  
175 per cent of the state-wide median income, and (2) upon the request of  
176 the Commissioner of Children and Families, may waive the income  
177 standards for adoptive families so that children adopted on or after  
178 October 1, 1999, from the Department of Children and Families are  
179 eligible for the child care subsidy program. [, and (3) on and after  
180 March 1, 2003, the commissioner shall reduce the income eligibility  
181 level to up to fifty-five per cent of the state-wide median income for  
182 applicants and recipients who qualify based on their loss of eligibility  
183 for temporary family assistance.] The commissioner may adopt  
184 regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, to establish income criteria  
185 and durational requirements for such waiver of income standards.

186       Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) The sum of one hundred eighty-five  
187 thousand eight hundred seventy-nine dollars is appropriated to the  
188 Department of Social Services, from the General Fund, for the fiscal  
189 year ending June 30, 2003, for the purpose of restoring funding to  
190 Safety Net Services.

191       Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2003*) The sum of three million seven hundred  
192 seventeen thousand five hundred eighty dollars is appropriated to the  
193 Department of Social Services, from the General Fund, for the fiscal  
194 year ending June 30, 2004, for the purpose of restoring funding to  
195 Safety Net Services.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2003</i>

**HS**           **Joint Favorable Subst.**